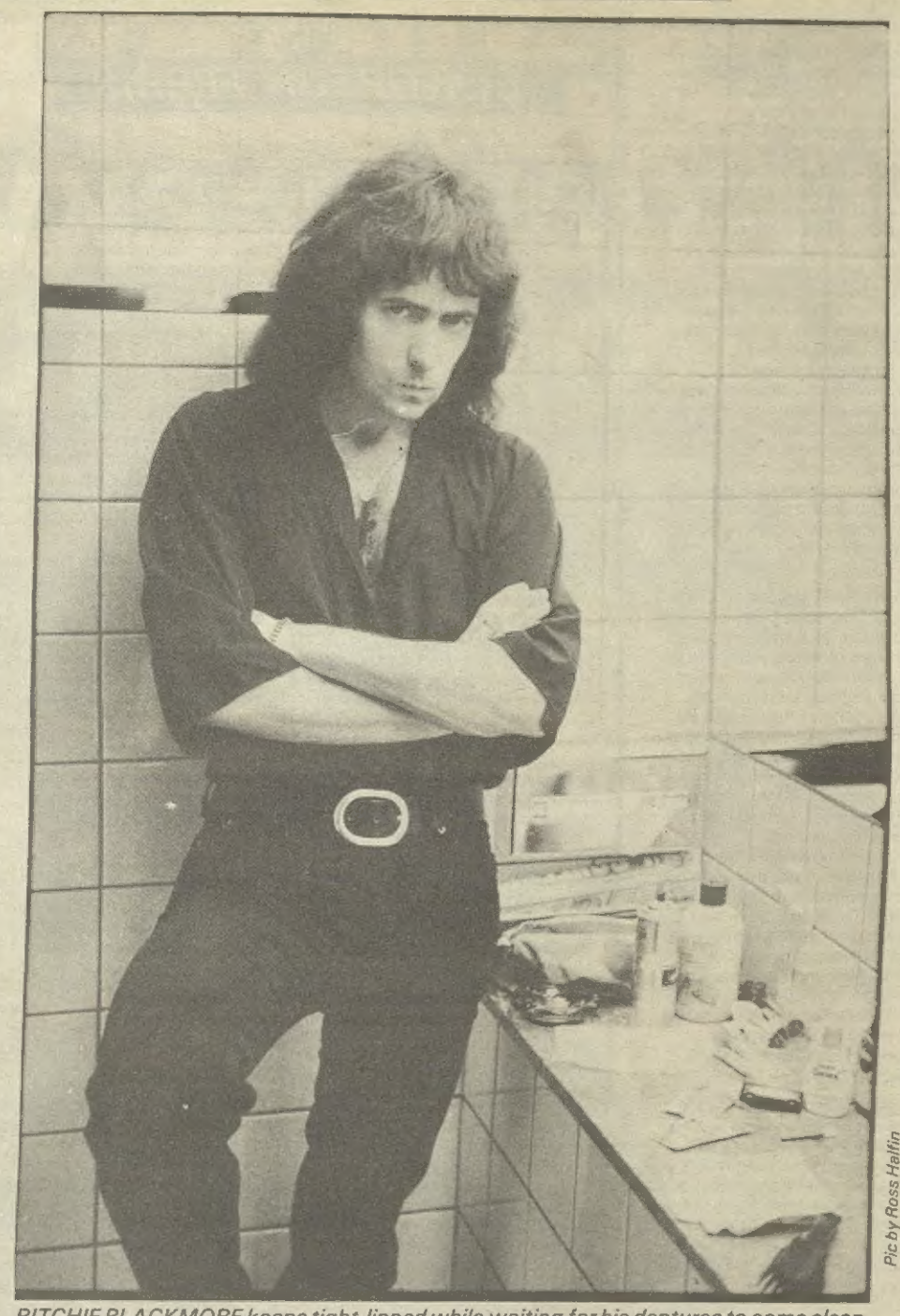
SUSANNE GARRETT shines a beacon of hope in a world of doom and gloom



Pic by Ross Halfin

RITCHIE BLACKMORE keeps tight-lipped while waiting for his dentures to come clean

The Rainbow room

AS SOON as I heard that tickets for the 1981 Rainbow concerts were to go on sale in March, I sent away a £10 postal order to Newcastle Upon Tyne City Hall for two front row tickets. My application was sent back, with the information that Rainbow hadn't booked there yet!

Same answer two weeks later when I wrote and phoned. Then I found out that tickets could only be bought through the official Rainbow fan club and I'm not a member.

Now it seems tickets will be going on sale to the general public (which probably means we'll get all the crap seats!) What's the story? Why are fans who're not in the fan club being messed about? — **Ritchie's Greatest Fan, South Shields.**

YOU'RE NOT. At the time of going to press, Rainbow tickets haven't been ordered, let alone printed. No-one has them — not even fan club members — and promoter Paul Loasby of Kiltorch Ltd has only just finalised details of the 13-dater July bash with Rainbow management in the States.

Blackmore's dozen due to happen at unseated venues between July 10 and 25 this year will cover Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, but band and promoter are seeking an alternative venue to the City Hall, as yet unconfirmed.

Fan Club members will get priority booking, as many dedicated followers who've since joined the club which started in April last year missed out on the last Rainbow extravaganza in February 1980. But non-members will have the same choice of standing space, although the club will be allocated enough tickets to cater for membership demand.

It's not too late to join the Rainbow Fan Club and ensure yourself a ticket or two. For details write to Rainbow Fan Club, PO Box 7, Prescott, Merseyside. English dues: £4,00 a year. European: £4,50.

BROUGHT TO BOOK

OVER THE years I've noticed that publishing companies always seem to jump on the bandwagon whenever a group becomes big and that many fans are misled into buying things that really aren't worth the money.

I'm talking about three new Omnibus publications, *The Clash* and *The Pretenders* by Miles and *Adam And The Ants* by Fred And Judy Vermorel, which are really no more than compilations of press clippings which people could collect themselves, with a few familiar photos thrown in for good measure.

Are there any rock books which are really worth buying? — **Dave Green, Bradford.**

AS THE abundance of posthumous Lennon pulp reading proves, any mid-price paperback with sex 'n' drugs 'n' rock 'n' roll as the main ingredient is bound to sell. The bulk of (auto)biography with a rock tag comprises secondhand true-life confessions and/or glamourised collections of half-truths. Scanning a collage of past clippings and cuttings can offer a range of ideas and impressions at least.

Avoid disappointment by browsing before you part with your money. Don't buy what you can't examine first. Consigning your money to a mail-order merchant for the latest variation on *The Alvin Nurd Story* by A. Toady could be a big mistake. Start your own scrapbook on the band of your choice and do one better than the clipping compilers.

BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO STARDOM

OUR BAND will be going into the studio soon with a view to releasing material as a cassette album locally. How do we protect ourselves regarding copyright? Do we need the same kind of clearance as for records.

Could we release the recording without it being on some kind of record/tape company label? Or should we start our own company? If so, how do we go about it?

How do we induce local record shops to sell it for us? Who sets the price and can the shop sell at what they like for their own profit? — **Phillip O'C, Belfast**

AS SOON as you've created an original work, a song or a piece of music, you're automatically protected by the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956. The creation belongs to you and no-one else can claim ownership without your say so. Sending a recorded tape, however rough, or a written transcription of your songs to yourself, recorded delivery, as and when you write them is the cheapest way of giving added date-stamped protection, which will show that you composed the material at a certain time in case you ever need to prove the point. Don't open the envelope. Keep it somewhere safe. Alternatively lodge your tape or written copy with a bank or a solicitor.

You can register your song *titles* with the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society, 380 Streatham High Road, London SW16 (tel: 01-769 3181). Drop a line for details and a title registration form.

Even if you plan to record your own songs only for release in a cassette form, ask the MCPS for a *statutory notice* form. It's in you own interests to put information about track listings to be recorded on their files.

You don't need to establish a record/tape label in order to sell your own cassettes. Track listings, the name of the band, in attractive logo form if you can do it, the release date and a copyright symbol are all you need. But, if you do want to start your own label, think of a name and register it with the Register Of Business Names, 55/71 City Road, London EC1 1BB (tel: 01-253 9393). This costs £1.00 only. Write to the Register for an application form and full fax, or call in. You might decide to use your band moniker for the label name too.

Attracting the interest of record retailers largely relies on your own legwork and initiative. If there's a friendly specialist or alternative record shop nearby, try your luck. The larger stores are unlikely to be bothered. The alternative distributors tend to stick to record releases only.

When negotiating a price, take your total production costs into consideration and decide how much you can afford to sell at, then see what any interested shop is willing to offer. A retailer can sell at any price he or she thinks people are likely to pay.

Provided you can stand the cost of the mail-out, advertising in the small-ad columns of the national music press is a possibility. Fanzines will give your tape a plug too and, if you work hard at it and your local paper covers the rock scene, you might get a small mention there. *Sounds'* DIY Corner, c/o the News Editor, regularly helps out lesser-known bands by detailing new self-releases on cassette or record. Selling your cassettes at gigs is also a useful distribution outlet.

Marketing your finished product brings you into the essential area of self-promotion and self-publicity. Letterhead paper, plus a distinctive band logo, can be used for press release publicity, and having some posters printed detailing up 'n' coming dates with news of the cassette are two means of getting your name around.

BASS MOTIVES

AFTER WEEKS of waiting for the delivery of Rickenbacker bass strings from Wing Music, 124 Station Approach, Tweedy Road, Bromley, my missive of enquiry was returned by the Post Office marked "gone away". I'm £18.17 down. Can you help? — **K. Evans, Swansea.**

JOHN PICKETT, manager of the London Road, Bromley branch of Wing Music, tells us that this company moved away from Station Approach five years ago, although the premises were used as a hire shop until last autumn.

It's possible that your cheque is still lying inside the vacant building, having been consigned there by the illustrious GPO. But, if it *has* been cashed, ask your bank for full details of exactly who has had your money and we'll investigate from there.

Meanwhile, if the price of Rickenbacker strings hasn't been deducted from your bank account, re-order the strings from Wing at their current address, 15 London Road, Bromley.

AND FINALLY...

IF YOU'VE recently been offered road crew or related work by a London-based individual claiming to promote Endurance, an American heavy metal group, and have been told that Sounds will be providing feature coverage, please contact us. We've never heard of the band. Tel: 01-836 1147.

FAIR DEAL

Eight-stone wimp in oversized shirt shocker

I SAW Quo at Hammersmith which was great. But the T-shirt which I bought from the foyer before the show turned out to be large, although I did ask for a small size. Exactly the same experience happened to a friend.

Admittedly, I didn't check the label as I expected to get what I asked for but I'm wondering if there's any way I can exchange it now? — **Matt Page, Sevenoaks**

THIS KIND of mix-up easily happens during the crowd crush at any multi-populated concert. For a small exchange zap it in the direction of Status Quo Merchandise, PO Box 63, London W2 3BZ.

While the usual tactical safeguard of test 'n' try before you buy can't always be applied to T-shirts, especially if you're buying from the midst of a mob surrounding a merchandising stall at a major concert, wherever possible open the pack before you leave the building, check the size and save yourself the headache of arriving home with a neck-tie or bell-tent instead of a wearable piece of memorabilia.

If shirts are mis-labelled and a so-called large turns out to be juvenile-size you have every right to return to the merchandiser. But if you've mistakenly grabbed a garment of inappropriate dimensions in the rush, your grounds for return are slim.

A word of warning. Steer clear of being caught by the dubious characters selling garb *outside* venues. This isn't official gear and, if it's less than wearable, you're unlikely to be able to track down the fly-by-night culprits, unless you recognise them by sight.

More tour shirts are destroyed through failure to follow washing instructions than manufacturing defects, or so the merchandisers would have us believe. If there's no care label, showing washing instructions or indication of which material you're getting, don't buy — unless you're a textiles expert. Otherwise you could come a cropper.

Most cotton shirts should be hand-washed at only 60°C. Avoid soaking coloured cotton too, this is bound to lead to washday disaster and the safest way to test colour fastness is by dunking a small corner of your T-shirt first. Cotton reacts well to a quick spin, or soaking off excess moisture in a towel too.

Regarding acrylic, polyester and other man-made fibres, these can be safely machine-washed, but to prevent fading, creasing and dramatic shrinkage and loss of shape, don't raise the temperature above 40°C, unless the instructions say so.

Shrinking cotton isn't necessarily rotten. Unless the label indicates that your shirt has already been through pre-shrink process, always expect shrinkage of two to three per cent in size.

DISTANT DRUMS

ANY CHANCE of helping me track down the distributors of Ludwig Drums? No-one has any information in this hell-hole. — **F. Keimel, Wolverhampton**

OK. FOR free Ludwig literature send a large stamped addressed envelope to UK distributor Rose-Morris And Company Ltd, 34 Gordon House Road, Kentish Town, London NW5.